



Teaching in the time of COVID-19

As COVID-19 sweeps the globe colleges and universities are opting to suspend face-to-face lectures and laboratories as a step to slow the spread of this disease. Rather than cancel their courses many instructors are working to deliver content and assess learning via distance learning and online pedagogies.

As this shift to online may be occurring midsemester and somewhat unexpectedly, instructors and curriculum designers are struggling to make the transition quickly and smoothly. The urgency of the situation is not a call for lowering standards or changing learning outcomes. Rather, it is an opportunity to revisit our courses with a focus on the critical learning outcomes.

When I started teaching online after many years in a traditional classroom, I discovered that creating coursework for an online setting is not a *transcriptional* process, in which only the medium by which the content delivery differed, but a *translational* one in which I needed to use an entirely different set of tools. For example, while creating video lecture captures or transcribing the text of the lectures may be the quickest way to make the transition, in the long-term instructors may consider using readings from a variety of sources; relatively brief written, audio or video “mini-lectures”; different textbooks, open educational resources, and other content sources; and importantly, building in frequent assessments with rapid feedback.

Delivering laboratory content via online modalities can be especially challenging. Moving it online may be an opportunity to reconfigure an experience that often requires that students focus much of their efforts on data collection, to one that emphasizes hypothesis formulation, experimental design, and data analysis. It is possible that when this crisis passes some of the insights gained in moving courses online will be useful in enhancing learning in traditional settings.

To help educators transition to online teaching, we have compiled a virtual issue of *Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Education* (BAMBED) articles that may serve as useful resources for BMB educators who are converting their face-to-face courses to the online modality.

This virtual collection also marks BAMBED's commitment to continue to expand this knowledge base and to make new resources available to the community of educators quickly. To that end, we welcome brief rapid communications from educators on creative and innovative approaches. In addition, we also welcome submissions by the leadership of professional organizations as they make statements of educational priorities and offer guidance to the field.

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ENDNOTE

¹These rapid communications should be limited to approximately 500 words (not including title, authors, contact information, etc.) and may include explanations of pedagogies that can be used to teach a single idea or a set of concepts. Given the urgency of this situation, evaluation of effectiveness will not be required. Upon submission authors should select “Rapid Communication—COVID-19” as the submission type.